

LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **February 26, 2002**

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **9**

CONSENT:

REGULAR: X

CLOSED SESSION:

ACTION:

INFORMATION: X

(Confidential)

ITEM TITLE: **Electoral Board/General Registrar Annual Report for 2001**

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive annual report.

SUMMARY:

The Electoral Board would like to briefly review the 2001 Annual Report and to respond to questions from City Council.

PRIOR ACTION(S):

None

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

CONTACT(S):

Anne Marie Middlesworth, General Registrar – 847-1609

ATTACHMENT(S):

February 12 Letter and 2001 Annual Report

REVIEWED BY:





The City of Lynchburg, Virginia

3236 ODD FELLOWS ROAD, LYNCHBURG, VA 24501 • (604) 847-1609

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

TO: Pat Kost, Clerk of Council

FROM: Anne Marie Middlesworth, *amm* General Registrar

RE: Electoral Board/General Registrar Annual Report for 2001

DATE: February 12, 2002

Please find enclosed the Annual Report for 2001 of the Electoral Board and General Registrar for the City of Lynchburg. We request you forward these copies to the members of City Council and the City Manager. We also request you place on the February 26, 2002 City Council Agenda time for us to briefly review this document and answer questions that anyone may have.

Thank you for your assistance. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Cc: Cameron Quinn, Secretary, State Board of Elections
Arelia Langhorne, Chairman, Electoral Board
Cham Light, Vice Chairman, Electoral Board
John Cobbs, Secretary, Electoral Board
Buford Driskill, Chair, Democratic City Committee
Wendell Walker, Chair, Republican City Committee

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COUNCIL/MANAGER
OFFICES

ANNUAL REPORT ELECTORAL BOARD AND GENERAL REGISTRAR 2001

The Office of the Voter Registrar is charged with providing voter registration services to the citizens of the City of Lynchburg, including registering eligible voters, maintaining the voter registration rolls, establishing and maintaining additional places for voter registration and participating in programs to educate the public on voter registration. In coordination with the Electoral Board, the Registrar facilitates election services such as absentee voting, maintaining polling places, voting equipment, training and recruiting election officers. The Electoral Board appoints the Registrar for a term of four years. The staff of the Registrar's Office consists of the Registrar, Deputy Registrar and a part-time staff member.

The Electoral Board is a three-member board. Representation on the Electoral Board is given to the political parties with the highest and second highest votes in the preceding gubernatorial election. Two electoral board members shall be of the political party that cast the highest votes for Governor. Electoral board members serve three-year terms that are staggered. The Electoral Board will shift in party representation in 2003.

Chairman Arelia S. Langhorne (D)
Term expires 2/28/05

Vice Chairman R. Chambliss Light (R)
Term expires 2/28/03

Secretary John W. Cobbs (R)
Term expires 2/28/04

The City operates 18 voting precincts during general, primary and special elections, which are maintained and equipped for Election Day by the Registrar's Office. Election materials including voting booths, ballot boxes, flags, voting signs and ramps are distributed to each polling site to transform the facility for voting. These materials are loaded, distributed and retrieved by three election technicians on loan from the Public Works Department who work with the Registrar and Electoral Board in the days before an election, Election Day and the day after an election.

As of January, 2002, there are 37,009 registered voters in the City of Lynchburg. There was a 48% voter turnout during the November 6, 2001 General Election.

<u>Ward/Precinct</u>	<u>Voting Location</u>	<u>Turnout 11/6/01</u>	<u># Voters</u>
<u>Ward</u>			
First Precinct	Moose Lodge	42.7%	4169
Second Precinct	Bedford Hills Elementary School	56.89%	2726
Third Precinct	First Presbyterian Church	55.13%	2319
Fourth Precinct	Rivermont Presbyterian Church	44.76%	1548
Fifth Precinct	First Christian Church	55.33%	1549

Ward II

First Precinct	St. Paul's Episcopal Church	38.9%	2612
Second Precinct	R.S. Payne Elementary School	36.22%	3673
Third Precinct	Fair-view Heights Community Center	48.60%	357

Ward III

First Precinct	Public Library	42.79%	1847
Second Precinct	Fairview Christian Church	40.54%	967
Third Precinct	Sheffield Elementary School	49.88%	1617
Fourth Precinct	Heritage Elementary School	39.18%	1901
Fifth Precinct	Beulah Baptist Church	54.50%	1634

Ward IV

First Precinct	St. Thomas More Catholic Church	50.12%	2436
Second Precinct	Sandusky Middle School	55.45%	1560
Third Precinct	Memorial Christian Church	49.62%	2755
Fourth Precinct	Linkhorne Middle School	51.85%	3339

Voter Turnout 1991-2001

November 1991	52.5%	General Assembly Election
May 1992	35.3%	Ward Election
November 1992	82.3%	Presidential Election
November 1993	65.9%	Gubernatorial Election
May 1994	39.7 %	At Large Election
November 1994	71.7%	Congressional Election
November 1995	59.08%	General Assembly Election
May 1996	38.17%	Ward Election
November 1996	75.0%	Presidential Election
November 1997	55.23%	Gubernatorial Election
May 1998	32.61%	At-Large Election
November 1998	35.2%	Congressional Election
November 1999	35.9%	General Assembly Election
May 2000	11.30%	Ward Election
November 2000	65.0%	Presidential Election
November 2001	48.69%	Gubernatorial Election

Registration Counts by Ward

Ward I	12,311
Ward II	6,642
Ward III	7,966
Ward IV	10,090

Relocation of the Office/ Voter Registration Analysis

The Registrar's Office relocated to the Department of Motor Vehicles building on September 25, 2000. The move was prompted by a cooperative effort between the State Board of Elections and the Department of Motor Vehicles to co-locate registrars to provide voter registration services at statewide DMV's. The National Voter Registration Act of 1996 commonly referred to as "Motor Voter" provided opportunities for voter registration at Department of Motor Vehicles offices as well as other state agencies. Motor Voter provided many opportunities to make voter registration more accessible to the public yet, the act insulated registrars from the registration process. Applicants no longer were required to register to vote in the presence of a registrar. Problems that resulted included incomplete and duplicate registrations and delayed registrations. Co-location began as a pilot program in Virginia Beach under the direction of registrar Marlene Hager. An assistant registrar was placed at the local DMV to register voters. The success prompted the State Board of Elections and the DMV to pursue co-location in other parts of the state.

An analysis of voter registration prior to relocating indicated that 80% of voter registration occurred at the Department of Motor Vehicles while less than 1% actually occurred at the Registrar's Office at City Hall. The expected outcome from relocation was to provide face to face customer service to registrants to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

During 2001, 70% of the City of Lynchburg voter registration applicants registered to vote at the local DMV. Citizens that register to vote in person have access to resources such as absentee balloting, elected official information, sample ballots and Election Day information. An assistant registrar is located at the voter registration booth to review voter registration applications and is available to answer questions. This has eliminated the number of incomplete applications that previously resulted in the denial of voter registration applications. In addition to reducing incomplete applications, duplicate voter registration has also been eliminated.

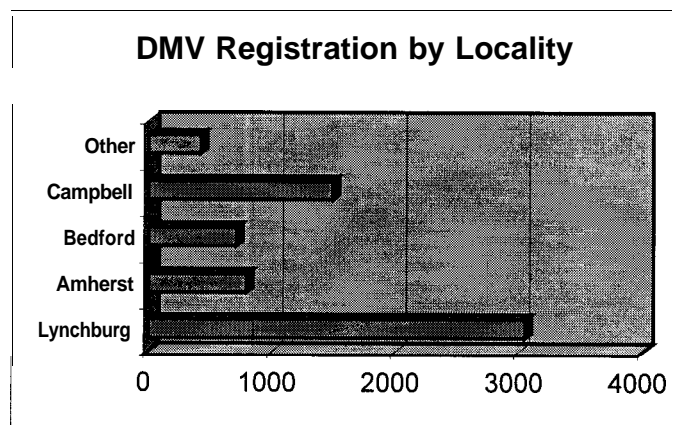
Applicants are provided an acknowledgement form as proof of registration until a voter registration card is received. The acknowledgement form includes the phone number of the local registrar and date of registration. This has proven invaluable prior to and on Election Day to pinpoint registration questions and Election Day concerns. Applicants are registered to vote before they leave DMV. Prior to re-locating to DMV applications were mailed by DMV to the State Board of Elections and then sent to local registrars before the applicant is registered to vote by the local registrar.

Registration Statistics January 1- December 31,2001

In Person/ DMV	3075	70%
DMV Received via mail	948	21%

<u>Other Registration</u>	417	9%
Total	4418	100%

Voter registration is available at the registration booth to all residents of the Commonwealth. If a non-city resident registers to vote, the application is reviewed for accuracy and forwarded to the local registrar for processing. Our office does not process their application, as the voter registration database (VVRS) is not currently setup to handle that activity. The cost of mailing to other registrars is incurred by DMV.



List Maintenance

The State Board of Elections has pursued a vigorous effort during the last year to remove convicted felons and deceased individuals from the voter registration rolls. The VVRS (Virginia Voter Registration System) now has a prohibited voter database that is updated monthly with records from the State Police and the Department of Health and Vital Statistics. This information is cross-referenced with registered voters. The database has the ability to match identifiers such as a social security number, date of birth and name. Previously this information was sent by paper to registrars to remove deceased individuals or convicted felons and relied on a name match. The database has the ability to flag a prohibited voter at the time of registration.

Election Services

2001 was an important year in election administration. There were changes this year as a result of the Presidential Election in 2000. The State Board of Elections created policy regarding “over-votes” with respect to machine programming. Due to media inquiries the State Board of Elections required registrars to report over-votes after the Presidential

Election. An ***over-vote*** is considered a mistake by the voter, that can be corrected and is identified as voting for more than one candidate in a race. ***An undervote*** is considered a choice by the voter to not vote for any particular race or issue.

The State Board of Elections established an over-vote policy in August 2001 to allow the voter an opportunity to correct an over-vote mistake. Optical scan and punch card voting equipment were required to be programmed to reject an over-voted ballot. In the event that a voter cast an over-voted ballot the equipment would reject the ballot. The Officer of Election would spoil the over-voted ballot and provide a new ballot to the voter to correct the mistake and cast the new ballot. If the voter did not choose to correct the over-voted ballot, the Officer of Election could override the machine. In that situation the over-voted race did not count, all other properly voted races were counted.

OVER VOTE/ UNDER VOTE BALLOTS

General Election November 2000

Over Voted Ballots	194
Under Voted Ballots	499
Ballots Cast President/Vice President	23,506

General Election November 2001

<u>Governor</u>	<u>Lieutenant Governor</u>	<u>Attorney General</u>
Over 6	Over 3	Over 0
Under 415	Under 837	Under 776
<u>House of Delegates</u>	<u>Commonwealth's Attorney</u>	<u>Sheriff</u>
Over 0	Over 0	Over 3
Under 4996	Under 4645	Under 1102
<u>Commissioner of Revenue</u>	<u>Treasurer</u>	
Over 0	Over 0	
Under 5007	Under 5581	

Combined Pollbook/Registered Voter's List

The State Board of Elections pursued a combined pollbook/registered voter's list pilot program during the November 2001 General Election. The City of Lynchburg participated in this pilot program. In previous elections the pollbook and the registered voter's list were used together to process voters at the polls. These two books were combined and a barcode was placed on the book in place of the voter's social security number. This barcode will be scanned to provide voting credit. The use of the barcode also provides added security to a voter's identification number. The State Board of

Election hopes to implement an electronic pollbook at the polls in the future. This is one step in that process. Officers of Election responded favorably to the combined pollbook.

Absentee Balloting

Absentee voting allows registered voters to vote prior to an election because they expect to be absent on Election Day or because they cannot get to the polls because of illness or disability. Absentee ballot applications were changed prior to the November General Election to eliminate the requirement of a witness on the application. An absentee ballot applicant is still required have a witness sign the envelope to return the voted ballot. Absentee balloting begins 45 days prior to a general election. Applicants that are disabled will be able to complete an application to request an absentee ballot for all elections beginning this year. This is an effort to make absentee voting more accommodating to the public.

Absentee Ballots November 2001

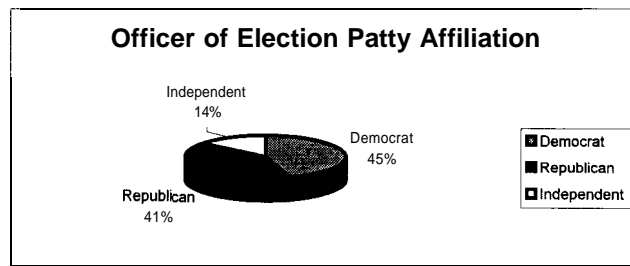
Mailed	344
In Person	182

Optical Scan Voting Equipment/Election Night Reporting

The City of Lynchburg uses optical scan voting equipment that was purchased in 1995. The equipment uses a computer programmed ballot scanner. The ballot is scanned, counted and stored. The optical scan voting equipment tabulates election results and uploads the results with a modem package using a dedicated phone line to the registrar's office. This affords registrar staff to provide election night reports to candidates and the press within a short turnaround time. Election night reporting was complete at the November General Election by 7:33p.m.

Officers of Election

A successful Election Day is dependent upon the staffing at the polling sites. Officers of Election are appointed by the Electoral Board to work on Election Day in the polling sites to perform the work that is done during the day and to ensure the integrity of the election. The polls are open statewide from 6:00a.m. to 7:00p.m. Election Day begins at 5:15a.m. for officers of election and does not end until the results are ascertained, reported and all paperwork is complete. Election officer duties include processing voters on the pollbook, setting up voting equipment, operating and instructing voters on the use of the voting equipment and closing the polling place. There are currently 140 officers of election. They are appointed to represent political parties for a term of one term that expires at the end of February.



Officers of election paid for the work they perform on Election Day. Each polling site has a Chief and Assistant Chief officer. These positions perform additional duties and are required to pick up and return supplies to the Registrar's Office. Officers of election currently earn:

Officer	\$115
Assistant Chief	\$125
Chief	\$150

The General Assembly has recently allowed election pages to work at the polls on Election Day. An election page is a high school student not of voting age but interested in learning the election process. This opportunity will be pursued in the next year as an outlet to voter education within the community.

Expense and Financial Management

The Electoral Board and the General Registrar are committed to honest and responsible management of expenses and finances.

Following through on this commitment the Electoral Board and the General Registrar have adopted monthly review of all their expenses. This review includes comparing expenses to a monthly budget. Any unusual or extraordinary expenses by either the General Registrar or Electoral Board will be communicated in advance of being incurred for discussion by the Electoral Board.

The General Registrar and Electoral Board have also reviewed the "City of Lynchburg Travel Expense Guidelines" and the "City of Lynchburg Procurement Policy Guidelines". The General Registrar and the Electoral Board are committed to any and all expenses being submitted in conformity with these Guidelines and with honest and complete supporting documentation. This includes avoiding any potential conflict of interest issues in expense or contractual matters.

These processes should result in the Office of the General Registrar and the Electoral Board being operated in a manner in which there is no question that expenses are legitimately related to their operations and that responsible financial decisions are being made.

Year 2002 Outlook and Challenges

Voter outreach will be pursued more vigorously in the next year to work with the local public and private high schools to educate voting age students about registration, absentee voting and election information. The election page program will be pursued to encourage students to participate in the election process.

There are two election cycles in 2002 with local elections in May and Senate and Congressional elections in November. The election cycle for local elections will begin in March with the processing of candidate petitions. Redistricting at the local level will be completed this year. As redistricting is determined, polling sites may be changed to accommodate a variety of needs such as cost and accessibility issues.

We look forward to working with our state and local partners and contiguous localities during what looks to be a challenging year for all levels of government. We are committed to providing positive customer service to the citizens of the City of Lynchburg and will continue to work within the political landscape to provide a non partisan environment to voter registration and election services.